

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Cancelled)

2. (Currently Amended) The ribboned polarization-maintaining fiber according to claim 21, wherein said ribbon portion is formed by fixing and coating said polarization-maintaining optical fibers with an adhesive, and aligning end faces of said polarization-maintaining optical fibers ~~which are used at least as a signal so as to become~~ have said predetermined plane of polarization.

3. (Currently Amended) The ribboned polarization-maintaining fiber according to claim 21, said ribbon portion further comprising positioning means for maintaining alignment of said polarization-maintaining optical fibers at said predetermined plane of polarization.

4. (Original) The ribboned polarization-maintaining fiber according to claim 3, wherein said positioning means is formed as a series of convex and concave shapes.

5. (Original) The ribboned polarization-maintaining fiber according to claim 4, wherein said convex and concave shapes are disposed at a regular pitch or discontinuously.

6. (Original) The ribboned polarization-maintaining fiber according to claim 5, wherein said convex and concave shapes are formed as a saw tooth shape or a curved wavy shape.

Claims 7-19 (Cancelled)

20. (Previously Presented) A polarization-maintaining optical fiber array made of a ribboned polarization-maintaining fiber according to claim 21.

21. (Currently Amended) A ribboned polarization-maintaining fiber, comprising:
a plurality of polarization-maintaining optical fibers; and
a cured ribbon portion having first and second lateral ends, ~~and~~having a length of 2 to 300 mm and surrounding at least some of the polarization-maintaining optical fibers, the polarization-maintaining optical fibers extending individually from the second lateral end of the ribbon portion,
wherein each of the polarization-maintaining optical fibers are rotated to a predetermined plane of polarization before the ribbon portion is cured. and
_____ at least an external exposed surface of said ribbon portion comprises a material that can be stripped to expose the polarization-maintaining optical fibers without damaging the polarization-maintaining optical fibers.

22. (Currently Amended) A ribboned polarization-maintaining fiber according to claim 21, wherein at least some of the polarization-maintaining optical fibers also extend from the first lateral end of the ribbon portion.

23. (Previously Presented) A ribboned polarization-maintaining fiber according to claim 21, wherein said cured ribbon portion is a cured adhesive.